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Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Human rights and unilateral coercive measures

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/155, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to bring the resolution to the attention of all Member States, to continue to collect their views and information on the implications and negative effects of unilateral coercive measures on their populations and to submit an analytical report thereon to the Assembly at its sixty-first session, highlighting the practical and preventive measures in that respect. The report summarizes the substantive replies received from the Governments of Cuba, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Trinidad and Tobago in response to a request for information sent pursuant to the resolution.

* A/61/150.

** The present report was submitted after the deadline in order to incorporate information received recently.

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Introduction

1. In paragraph 9 of its resolution 60/155, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to bring the resolution to the attention of all Member States, to continue collecting their views and information on the implications and negative effects of unilateral coercive measures on their populations and to submit an analytical report thereon to the Assembly at its sixty-first session, highlighting the practical and preventive measures in that respect.

2. On 9 May 2006, in accordance with the resolution, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights sent a request to all permanent missions to the United Nations bringing the resolution to the attention of Member States and seeking their views. As at 15 August 2005, the Office had received responses from the Governments of Cuba, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Trinidad and Tobago. The present report contains summaries of the replies received.

Information received from Member States

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[12 June 2006]

1. The Government of Cuba indicated that this question is very important as millions of people in many developing countries, including Cuba, are victims of unilateral measures imposed by developing countries. It recalled that, in several resolutions and decisions, the General Assembly, the former Commission on Human Rights and numerous international summits and conferences organized under the auspices of the United Nations have determined that economic coercive measures are contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and to international law. The application of unilateral coercive measures as a tool of political and economic coercion is an attack on the independence, the sovereignty and the right to self-determination of peoples. Experience has shown that the main victims are the people of the countries subjected to such measures, in particular the most vulnerable groups of the population, including children, women, the elderly and persons with disabilities.

2. The Government recalled that the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, adopted by the General Assembly in 1970, which developed the principle of non-intervention in matters within the domestic jurisdiction of any State, clearly indicates that no State may use or encourage the use of economic, political or any other type of measures to coerce another State to obtain from it the subordination of the exercise of its sovereign rights and to secure from it advantages of any kind.

3. According to the Government of Cuba, the imposition of unilateral coercive measures has constituted the key instrument of United States policy towards Cuba for the past 50 years. The blockage has caused, and continues to cause, serious consequences to the physical, psychological and spiritual well-being of the people

of Cuba. Since 1992, the General Assembly adopts annually a resolution calling for an end to the United States embargo against Cuba.

4. The Government indicated that it held the firm conviction that it is more important than ever that the international community continue to denounce the application of such measures.

Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

[Original: Arabic]
[1 June 2006]

1. The Government of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya recalled that the World Conference on Human Rights called upon States to refrain from any unilateral measure that impedes the full enjoyment by citizens of their human rights such as the right to an adequate standard of living, including health, food and social services.

2. The Government also recalled that the General Assembly requested States not to use economic sanctions to put pressure on any other States as they constituted violations of the sovereignty of States.

3. The Government called on States to refrain from using unilateral coercive measures which have an impact on economic relations among countries and violate international law and human rights law in particular. It also called on all States not to ask for unilateral coercive measures and not to allow their implementation as the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya was among the countries that suffered from such measures which hindered the enjoyment of civil and political rights, and economic, social and cultural rights, as well as the right to development.

Trinidad and Tobago

[Original: English]
[9 June 2006]

The Government indicated that Trinidad and Tobago has not been subject to any unilateral coercive measures and that it does "not support imposition of such measures by other States on their population".